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# Tyzen Hsiao's Memories of Home as a pedagogical tool to introduce Romantic and Impressionistic styles to intermediate piano students

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TYZEN HSIAO'S *MEMORIES OF HOME*  
AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL TO INTRODUCE ROMANTIC AND IMPRESSIONISTIC  
STYLES TO INTERMEDIATE PIANO STUDENTS

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this treatise is to study Tyzen Hsiao's *Memories of Home* as a pedagogical tool to introduce Romantic and Impressionistic styles to intermediate students. This work includes *Prelude*, *Memory*, *Playground*, *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, *Elegy*, and *Frolic*.

This monograph is divided into four chapters as follows: Chapter One introduces the development of Western music in Taiwan; Chapter Two includes detailed biographical information of Tyzen Hsiao; Chapter Three defines the three periods of his compositional career, the various influences on his style, and also contains a general analysis of his musical style and character; Chapter Four presents a theoretical analysis of Tyzen Hsiao's solo piano work *Memories of Home* from formal and stylistic perspectives, and furthermore presents this work's use as a pedagogical tool to introduce Romantic and Impressionistic styles to intermediate piano students; a conclusion then follows.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN MUSIC IN TAIWAN**

Western musical culture was introduced to the island nation of Taiwan by foreign missionaries around 1624.<sup>1</sup> As governments and regimes changed, so did the music and culture of Taiwan. This chapter will present a basic history of the governing regimes in Taiwan and the development of Western music in Taiwan correlating with each important period.

#### **Origins (circa 1624)**

Taiwan was occupied by Holland and Spain from 1624 to 1662, and during this occupation Western music was first introduced through Christian missionaries. The Dutch assigned thirty-two clergymen, as well as many missionaries and teachers, to preach Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

In connection with their missionary activity, the clergymen established churches and schools. Western musical education was offered in the form of vocal instruction of sacred music to the Taiwan natives.<sup>3</sup> Both singing and chorus were taught. Singing is one of the most important musical forms of Christian ceremony, and chorus was a required course for

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<sup>1</sup> Yu-Siou Lu, *History of Taiwanese Music* (Taipei: Wu-Nan Book Inc., 2003), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 50-56.

<sup>3</sup> Hui-Yun Yee, "The Development of Western Sacred Music in China." (Diss., Chinese Culture University 1970).

those being converted to Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

In 1662, the spread of Western music came to a standstill when Chen-Gong Cheng expelled the Dutch and Spanish from Taiwan. The new regime forced all missionaries to leave Taiwan. As a result, all instruction of Western music ended until 1857.

### **The Qing Dynasty (1662-1894)**

In 1662 General Chen-Gong Cheng, of the Ming Dynasty, led an army from China to Taiwan and landed in Tainan. General Cheng, who had refused to surrender to the Qing Dynasty in China, successfully expelled the Dutch and Spanish from Taiwan. Churches built by the Dutch were demolished, and all Christian activities, including Western music, were prohibited.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, General Cheng died, and in 1683 the Qing dynasty sent General Shih-Lang, who officially took control of the government of Taiwan<sup>6</sup>.

In 1857 the Treaty of Tientsin<sup>7</sup> opened the port cities of Taiwan (An-Ping, Tainan; Dan-Shui, Taipei) to international trade with Britain and France. Soon Presbyterian missionaries entered Taiwan to preach and to promote Western music. Christian hymns were widely taught in churches throughout Taiwan.<sup>8</sup> The church became an important

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<sup>4</sup> Yu-Siou Lu, 53-56.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 59, 84.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>7</sup> Treaty of Tientsin, Britain and France threatened war on China. China was forced to sign the treaty to open ports to Britain and France for activities of trade. Ibid., 59.

<sup>8</sup> Yu-Siou Lu, 84-85.

cultural center for the influence of Western music throughout Taiwan.<sup>9</sup> Several new theological schools were established that offered music courses, such as Tainan Chang Jung Senior High School and National University of Tainan.<sup>10</sup> Many music teachers arrived in Taiwan to teach at the theological colleges.

Particularly prominent among these teachers was Ms. Isabel Taylor,<sup>11</sup> a Canadian pianist who taught at Dan-Jiang Senior High School and fostered a generation of Taiwanese musicians. Ms. Taylor introduced Western piano technique and literature to her students; she was one of the most important music educators of her time, and is considered the “Mother of Piano Music in Taiwan”.<sup>12</sup>

### **Japanese Colonial Period (1895-1945)**

In 1894, Japan defeated China in the War of Jiawu, and the countries signed the Treaty of Maguan. The treaty forced the Qing dynasty to cede the territory of Taiwan to Japan. Taiwan remained a Japanese colony until after the Second World War.<sup>13</sup>

During the Japanese colonial period, the government established many new schools that offered music courses and encouraged the Taiwanese people to learn Western music.<sup>14</sup>

In order to subjugate the Taiwanese people and eliminate a national consciousness, the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 127-129.

Japanese government encouraged Taiwanese people study in Japan. During this period most Taiwanese musicians travelled to Japan to study and gained degrees from Japanese schools, such as the Musashino Academia Musicae and Tokyo University of the Arts.<sup>15</sup> Students from Taiwan traveled to Japan for several decades and gained a far more comprehensive knowledge of Western music. This generation of Taiwanese musicians, educated in Japan, did much to popularize Western music in Taiwan. After returning from studies in Japan, they performed many concerts in the cities of Taipei, Hsinchu, Changhua, Taichung, Tainan and Kaohsiung.<sup>16</sup> During the earthquake of 1935 they held 31 benefit concerts to raise funds to help the victims of this tragedy.<sup>17</sup>

### **After The Second World War**

After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) came to power and became the government of Taiwan. The Chinese Nationalist Party started to build institutions for the development of Western music.<sup>18</sup> Schools of music and preparatory schools were established systematically in elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools and universities to offer a complete and professional Western musical training.<sup>19</sup> Many Japanese-educated musicians served as the

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<sup>15</sup> Yu-Siou Chen, *Review of Taiwanese Music* (Taipei, 1997), 149.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 150-151.

<sup>18</sup> Yu-Siou Lu, 176.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 180-181.

faculty of these new schools. Western music therefore became the main object of all music studies in Taiwanese universities after 1945.

After 1945, different schools of composition emerged in Taiwan. One school of Taiwanese composers that included Tyzen Hsiao, applied the technique, forms, harmonies, and structures of Western music, especially the Classical and Romantic styles. A contrasting school of composition employed a Taiwanese nationalist style. These composers wrote music featuring Taiwanese folk songs, Chinese instruments, and Chinese rhythmic patterns exploring and collecting Taiwanese folk music that had almost completely disappeared.<sup>20</sup> The nationalist composers promoted the establishment of a Department of Traditional Music at several universities, including the National Taiwan Normal University and Taipei National University of the Arts.<sup>21</sup>

Today the music of Taiwanese composers is performed frequently in concerts throughout Taiwan. Although in Taiwan Western music is still dominant, the music of Taiwanese composers is being performed more frequently nationally and internationally.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 153-156.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

#### Hsiao's Early Musical Education

Tyzen Hsiao was born on 1 January 1938 in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. His father was a dentist and his mother was a professional pianist. The entire family was active and rooted deeply in the Presbyterian Church, which would prove to be an important influence on Hsiao's life. Hsiao began studying Western classical music with his mother at the age of five. Under his mother's guidance, Hsiao began piano lessons and studied both classical and church music, including sacred music, hymns, and anthems. At the age of seven, he gave his first public performance on the piano. Pianos were uncommon in southern Taiwan during the 1940s, and since the Hsiao family was one of the few to own one, they were regarded as one of the most important musical families in the area.<sup>22</sup>

Although Hsiao's family was able to offer him a solid education in music, his early study did not always go smoothly. Hsiao's second year of elementary school was disrupted by the Second World War as he and his family were forced to move to the rural area around Tainan City for safety.<sup>23</sup> Once his formal studies resumed, Hsiao was assigned to perform as pianist at important concerts. Though he already had performance experience and a solid musical background, he still hoped to obtain formal training at a

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<sup>22</sup> Hua-Jung Yen, *Hsiao Tyzen—Romantic Taiwan Taste* (Taipei: China Times Publishing Co., 2002), 14.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

professional school of music.<sup>24</sup> Hsiao's desire grew stronger after enrolling at the Tainan Chang Jung Senior High School.<sup>25</sup>

Tainan Chang Jung Senior High School was the first senior high school in Taiwan established by the Presbyterian Church of England, with the primary purpose of teaching Christianity. Many events were held to promote sacred music.<sup>26</sup> The continuous musical activity at Tainan Chang Jung Senior High School was influential in strengthening Hsiao's aspirations to become a musician. Hsiao's classmate, Mr. Yong-He Lin recalls their student days together:

“Tyzen had great musical talent, and there was no way to hide his ability when he was so active in the school. He had great basic technique in classical music after under studying with Ms. Jing-Hua Kao and Ms. Chih-Mei Kao. There was a practice room in the first floor of the main entrance to Tainan Chang Jung Senior High School. You could always hear the sound of the piano coming from that room. If the sound was not made by Ms. Chic-Mei Kao or some other teacher, it was made by Tyzen. He loved to play pieces by Chopin, and he could not help playing for a long period of time. Once he sat in front of the piano, without eating any food for the whole afternoon.”<sup>27</sup>

Hsiao had an extremely hard time convincing his father to accept his aspirations to become a musician. He recalled:

“Since I was the oldest child, my father felt that I should follow the traditional path and become a doctor like him. These traditional views are very common in Taiwan. However, since my mother is a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

professional pianist and she studied abroad in Japan, I started my musical training when I was very young. I do love music. I can still remember when my mother told me, “You are the most sensitive and the most intelligent among all of the students I have taught.” Indeed, parents always think their children are the best and possess extreme talent and they might become the next superstar.”<sup>28</sup>

It is clear that Hsiao had a strong enthusiasm for classical music even though he did not have complete support from his parents, particularly his father. Hsiao’s father still hoped his son would give up his dream and become a doctor. Hsiao said:

“In high school, I was determined to become a great musician. I knew that this would be a big challenge and there would inevitably be disturbance in my family. One day, my father met his classmate, the President of Tainan Chang Jung Senior High School on the seventieth anniversary of the school. The President told my father, “Based on Tyzen’s grades, I believe he will be accepted by the medical school; however, if Tyzen chooses medical science as his career, he would be just a commonplace doctor, because this is not what he wants to be. But, if you agree to let him study music professionally, his future achievement will be immeasurable.” After a great deal of consideration, my father finally changed his mind. I was so thankful for the President’s help convincing my father. Finally, I was on the road to a career in music.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Undergraduate and Graduate Education**

In 1959, Hsiao was formally accepted to the National Taiwan Normal University and began his professional training as a piano performance major. During his studies, Hsiao

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<sup>28</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, *Romanticism with Deep Affection: Selected Articles about the Music of Hsiao Tyzen* (Taipei: Spring Wind Publishing Co., 1999), 21.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 21.



worked with renowned piano professors Jing-Hua Kao, Tzu-Mei Kao and Fu-Mei Lee.

Although majoring in piano performance, Hsiao began to compose some easy pieces, and studied composition with Professor Tsang-Hui Hsu. Even though Hsiao considered the works composed during this period to be derivative, his composition teacher was able to see Hsiao's talent in composition. Professor Hsu even offered Hsiao private lessons for free.

Hsiao recalled:

“Hsu was my composition professor while I studied at the National Taiwan Normal University. At that time, Hsu had just finished a program in Paris and had returned to Taiwan with great enthusiasm for teaching. Hsu was looking forward to introducing new musical trends from Paris and incorporating them into Taiwanese music education. He was also eagerly looking forward to establishing new ideas about Chinese music. Just as expected, Hsu's new music shook the whole school of music in Taiwan and caused a great sensation after his debut. I was a student at The National Taiwan Normal University then, and fortunately, I was able to take his class. Before studying with him, I had been writing several small pieces. However, they were the equivalent of copying and imitating music to me.... In fact, imitating is a necessary process to learn how to compose for most musicians. I still remember that each student had to play their own works in front of all the students in the first class. I was surprised that my work actually caught Hsu's attention. Right after this, I became his private student. Although I told him I could not afford the fee to study with him privately, he still was very kind and told me that he would not charge me; being his student was all he asked of me.”<sup>30</sup>

In 1963, Hsiao received the Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from the National Taiwan Normal University. He then returned to his hometown of Kaohsiung to

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 22.

marry Jen-Tzu Kao and to teach music lessons. However, being a music instructor alone did not satisfy Hsiao's aspirations. After a year and a half, Hsiao decided to travel to Musashino Academia Musicae, in Japan, for two years of further study. During this time, he studied composition with Fujimoto Hideo and piano with Nakane Nobue. Hideo appreciated Hsiao's compositional talent, and offered to teach him for free, as Hsu had done. Two years later, Hsiao obtained his diploma from the Musashino Academia Musicae, and in 1967 returned to Taiwan to serve on the faculty of several universities and colleges, such as Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, and The National Kaohsiung Normal University.

### **Hsiao's Early Professional Career in Taiwan**

As a successful music educator, Hsiao trained a great number of current musicians and educators in southern Taiwan. He never stopped studying, even while serving as a faculty member himself. In order to advance further his own piano technique and increase his compositional ability, Hsiao continued his piano studies with Ms. Isabel Taylor and composition lessons with Dr. Robert Scholz.<sup>31</sup>

Hsiao was an active and accomplished pianist during this period. He performed Grieg's Concerto with the 3B Orchestra conducted by Sue-Der Lee, and Beethoven's Concerto No. 3 with the Kaohsiung City Symphony Orchestra.<sup>32</sup> Beside performing and

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<sup>31</sup> Hua-Jung Yen, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 35.

teaching, Hsiao also focused on composing instrumental and chamber music, including such notable works as *Prelude and Fugue* for Piano Trio, *Fantasy Heng-Chhun Melody* for solo violin, *Poetic Echo*, Opus 37, for solo piano, and *Fantasy Waltz*, Opus 38, for two pianos.

Hsiao had many important achievements from 1960 to 1980. In 1967, Hsiao published his first collection of choral music. His oratorio, *Jesus Christ* and his *Symphonic Poem of China* were published in 1971 and 1972. In 1975 at Zhongshan Hall in Taipei, Hsiao held the first *Hsiao Tyzen Night* to introduce his works formally to the public. The following year, Hsiao accepted a commission to compose a work, *Nostalgia* (思鄉曲), for the Hua-Mei youth string orchestra.<sup>33</sup> This work was also performed as Hsiao's compositional debut in the United States of America by the same group, conducted by Mei-Jen Kuo.

Hsiao's successful activities in Taiwan came to a halt in 1977, when Hsiao was forced to leave Taiwan for personal and political reasons. His wife's business investments had failed, leaving the family destitute.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, the Taiwanese Opposition Party endorsed a song, *Taiwanese March*, set to the melody of one of Hsiao's compositions. This rally song was used in a parade opposing the government during the period of martial law in Taiwan.<sup>35</sup> Though he had not directly done anything wrong Hsiao was blacklisted by the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party), and decided to emigrate to the United States in 1977.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## Early Musical Life in the United States

Upon his arrival in the United States in 1977, Hsiao came to realize that there was some demand amongst his friends from Taiwan for new singable Taiwanese melodies for gatherings and parties with his friends, which gave them a strong sense of national pride.<sup>36</sup> This interest in Taiwanese music prompted Hsiao to compose numerous songs using native Taiwanese folk melodies.<sup>37</sup> Hsiao began work on documenting the folk music of Taiwan, and making arrangements to increase their quality and quantity.<sup>38</sup> Hsiao's music is full of his deep affection toward Taiwan, a feeling of nostalgia. His compositions introduced Taiwanese folk music to the United States and provided a sense of comfort and national pride for many Taiwanese people living abroad.<sup>39</sup>

While living in United States in 1985, Hsiao gave a North American tour and performed in ten major US cities (including Chicago, Houston and San Francisco) sponsored by the Taiwanese Music Culture organization. In 1986, Hsiao enrolled at the California State University, Los Angeles (CSLA) to study composition under Dr. B. K. Kim, where he received his Master of Music degree, May 1987. According to Hsiao:

“My career as a student seems to keep going on and on. Under Dr. Kim's teaching at CSLA, I completed my Master of Music degree in Composition in 1987.... I know my musical style has certainly changed since my days studying composition with Dr. Kim...”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 295.

<sup>37</sup> Hua-Jung Yen, 41-43.

<sup>38</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 293.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 295-296.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 23.

## Professional Activities in the United States

Beginning in the late 1980's Hsiao's compositions came to greater prominence in North America. In 1988, Hsiao accepted a commission from the Taiwanese United Foundation—Southern California (TUF, SC) to write concerti for violin, cello and piano. The famous virtuoso violinist Chao-Liang Lin gave the premiere of Hsiao's Violin Concerto in D Major, Opus 50, with San Diego Symphony Orchestra in 1992. Four years later, Lin performed this work in Shanghai, China. In 1994, pianist Jonathan Tang gave the premiere of Hsiao's Piano Concerto in C Minor, Opus 53, with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, directed by Clyde Mitchell. One year later, Milton Stern performed the same piano concerto with the Taipei Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Henry Mazer, and with the Redlands Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jon Robertson in Los Angeles. During this same year, cellist Felix Fan premiered Hsiao's Cello Concerto in C Major, Opus 52 with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra.<sup>41</sup>

Hsiao also received additional international attention with the composition of his *1947 Overture*. This work's composition came at a critical point in Hsiao's life. Just before Christmas Eve, 1993, while composing the *1947 Overture*, Hsiao suffered a serious heart attack. One of his close friends recalled:

“Hsiao was preparing a concert right before Christmas Eve in 1993. One day he suddenly felt terrible pains in his chest, and he knew he could not ignore it anymore. He prayed to God to be able to complete

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 111.

this overture... We asked for help and told them he is our “Chopin of Taiwan”, a Japanese-American doctor finally agreed to do the surgery. It took eleven hours to finish. It is not hard to imagine the torture we endured as we waited for him to come out of the operating room.”<sup>42</sup>

Hsiao recovered from the heart surgery and in 1995, Wes Kenney conducted the premiere of the *1947 Overture* with the Oakland Youth Orchestra in Oakland, California. Five years later, the Russian-American conductor, Vakhtang Jordania, conducted the work with the Russian Federal Orchestra. Also on the program was Hsiao’s piano concerto, performed by the first-prize winner of the Russia International Piano Competition, Anatoly Sheludiakov. One year earlier, maestro Jordania conducted the Russian Federal Orchestra in the premiere of Hsiao’s *Formosa Symphony* in Moscow. These concerts were well received, and, thanks to international exposure, critics, scholars and musicians began to regard Hsiao’s works with increasing interest.

During this time period, Hsiao also received many awards honoring his skill and accomplishments as composer, including the Humanity Award from the Taiwanese American Foundation in 1989, the Contribution Award of Taiwanese Culture from the Taiwanese Association of America- New Jersey in 1994, and the Outstanding Contribution Award from the Chuan Lyu Foundation- California in 1994.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 283-285.

## Return to Taiwan

After the Kuomintang lifted martial law in 1987, the Taiwanese government became a true democracy.<sup>43</sup> Hsiao was allowed to return to Taiwan in 1996, and attended several invitation-only concerts, recording events and speeches. In 1997, his supporters established The *Tyzen Hsiao Cultural and Educational Foundation*, which organized and published a complete collection of his works.

Hsiao has received numerous top prizes in the Golden Melody Awards in Taiwan. His album, *Taiwan Affection, Tyzen Heart: Tyzen Hsiao's Works for Solo Violin and Piano*, recorded by Shien-Da Su and Lina Yeh, won the first prize in Year's Best Album (2010). Hsiao also received the first prize in Year's Best Composer (2010) with the solo piano work, *Memories of Home* (1987). These honors are indicative of Hsiao's achievement as a composer, and his recognition in Taiwan.

Hsiao currently resides in Los Angeles, but he frequently visits Taiwan to appear at academic events, attend concerts, and participate in the musical culture of Taiwan.

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<sup>43</sup> Yu-Siou Lu, 211.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **HSIAO'S COMPOSITIONAL CAREER, MUSICAL STYLE AND CHARACTER**

In an interview, Hsiao stated that he views his work as being divided into three different periods<sup>44</sup> that are closely related to his travels and his emigration to North America. These include the early phase, up to 1976; the middle, 1977- 1985; and the late phase, 1986 to present.

#### **The Early Period (1959- 1976)**

In 1959, Hsiao was a student at the National Taiwan Normal University. His major was in Piano Performance, but he was also enrolled in a composition class with the well-known Taiwanese composer, Chang-Hui Hsu. He soon became mostly interested in composition. Professor Hsu quickly recognized and encouraged Hsiao's talent in composition. Although Hsu was an active composer, Hsiao neither followed Hsu's model, nor appeared interested in composing truly modern music, but instead chose to pursue a Romantic style of composition. Though Hsiao did not conform to what professor Hsu had expected, and insisted on composing in his own way, the two maintained a positive working relationship.<sup>45</sup> Hsiao's early compositions were mostly derived from the Romantic style of Frédéric Chopin. Hsiao felt that studying composers from the past was an inevitable part

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<sup>44</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 34-35.

<sup>45</sup> Hua-Jung Yen, 30.



of the development and growth of most composers.<sup>46</sup> First, he tried his hand at writing smaller- scale pieces, including sacred works and pieces for children's chorus. *The Song of Taiwan*, for solo violin, the *Poetic Echo Part I and Part II*, for piano solo, *Opus 37*, and the *Fantasy Waltz, Opus 39* for two pianos, are representative works of this early period in Hsiao's development.

### **The Middle Period (1977- 1985)**

Hsiao's second period of composition spanned the years between 1977 to 1985. At that time, Hsiao gradually developed his own individual style, and tried to diversify his compositions into additional genres, such as chamber music and instrumental works. His music not only shows his romantic predilections, but also exudes his enthusiasm for Taiwanese folk music. Coincidentally, this period was a time of great personal turmoil in Hsiao's life. Hsiao stopped composing for a brief time after his emigration to the U.S. in 1977, but resumed his activity in 1978.

Hsiao created his own musical style during this period by combining the compositional techniques of Western music with Chinese traditional scales (modes) and Taiwanese folk music. Not only did he compose original art songs, he adapted many existing Taiwanese folk songs. Instead of using the traditional Mandarin, Hsiao chose to utilize the native

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<sup>46</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 22.

language of Taiwan in his art songs. During this period, Hsiao also composed chamber music, including such notable works as *The Highlander's Suite, Opus 47*, for piano quintet, *Taiwan, Ours*, for piano and string quintet and *The Hometown at Twilight* for string quartet. Other representative works of the middle period include *Snack Stall* and *The Vagabond* for solo voice, *March of Democracy* for orchestra and chorus, and a transcription of *Take Care, Mama* for strings and chorus.

### **The Late Period (1986- )**

In 1986, Hsiao's music once again evolved in new directions. Around this time, Hsiao began composing large-scale works. He also adopted more modern compositional techniques during his studies with Dr. Kim at CSLA. Although these techniques are found throughout Hsiao's works of this period, his music is still imbued with the Romantic style.

Hsiao said:

“... After studying with Dr. Kim, I know that my style and technique of composition have been changing. Although I still am a Romantic who prefers emotional writing, I know the technique and intention of my music have deeply spread to the field of modern music; even so, it still maintains the beautiful melody and colorful harmony... I feel like opening the window and seeing the mystic starry sky in the night; I can not help writing song after song to praise nature and life.”<sup>47</sup>

Works written during this period include *Formosa Symphony*, Opus 49, Violin

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 23.

Concerto in D Major, Opus 50, Cello Concerto in C Major, Opus 52, Piano Concerto in C Minor, Opus 53, Symphonic Poem for Strings, *Psalm 100* and *The Most Beautiful Flower* for Soprano, *Love and Hope* for Chorus, *1947 Overture*, Opus 56, *Ilha FORMOSA*, *Requiem for Martyr di Formosa*, Opus 63, the oratorio *The Prodigal Son*, the Piano Trio *Formosa* and *The Angel from Formosa* for Orchestra. These works comprise Hsiao's most important contributions. The music of this period was performed to much acclaim in the United States, Canada, Russia, Taiwan and China.

The influences on Hsiao's musical styles can be divided into three different categories: sacred music, Chinese traditional scales (modes) and Taiwanese folk music, and Western music.

## **Sacred Music**

Hsiao was born into a Christian family, and was deeply influenced by church music from a young age, such as Christian hymns. His strong belief in Christianity is the primary and most important source of inspiration in his music.

Hsiao has gone through many difficult ordeals in his life. One of the most serious happened in 1993, when he felt that, by the grace of God, he had been saved from death. This event prompted Hsiao to create as many compositions as possible to thank God for his kindness. For this reason, he has been composing sacred music for several decades.

“God perhaps needs me to keep on composing more native sacred music until the last moment of my life since God saved me. Most of the church songs and hymns we sing today are from Western countries. If we praise God through our own native church music, that would be closer to our soul... In spite of this, there are some composers who write native church music in this country. I was gifted with a special talent by God, and I would rather concentrate on composition than have a high salary from teaching.”<sup>48</sup>

Hsiao’s sacred music features beautiful and simple melodies for soprano voice with simple accompaniments. Most of the texts in his vocal music are drawn from Scripture, and are written in Taiwanese, like the majority of Hsiao’s works. Hsiao recalled the period when he was composing his oratorio, *Jesus Christ*:

“Only Jesus Christ, music and I exist together everyday in my life. I am just a way for God to communicate with others. When I sat in the concert hall with the audience and listened to the premiere of *Jesus Christ*, I was so touched when they sang. I could not help asking myself: is it true that this music was written by me? Yes! Yes, God held my hand to complete it.”<sup>49</sup>

Today, over a hundred of Hsiao’s sacred compositions have been widely adopted by churches in Taiwan and abroad.

### **Chinese Traditional Modes and Taiwanese Folk Songs**

Although Hsiao’s compositions are based on the traditional compositional technique of

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 245.

Western music, his music is deeply imbued with the Chinese style of composition.<sup>50</sup> The two main influences in this classification are the Chinese traditional modes and Taiwanese folk songs. The pentatonic scale (mode) is the primary Chinese compositional technique used frequently by Hsiao. The Chinese designate the notes of the pentatonic scale as *Gong*, *Shang*, *Jue*, *Zhi*, *Yu*, which is similar to Do, Re, Mi, Sol and La of Western solfeggio. Since each of the five notes can be the tonic of a pentatonic scale, there are total five pentatonic modes – *Gong* mode, *Shang* mode, *Jue* mode, *Zhi* mode and *Yu* mode, based on the different order of the notes (intervals) of the scale (see Figure 3-1).<sup>51</sup> The identification of a mode is determined by the harmonies at the end of a phrase, not the order of pitches in the melody.

Many Taiwanese composers have created their new music by utilizing the Chinese traditional modes, including Tyzen Hsiao. In Hsiao's *Memories of Home*, he used the traditional Chinese modes to create the main theme and melody in several different keys (see Chapter Four, Figure 4-5, 4-7, 4-21, 4-26 and Page 46). Hsiao was also inspired by Taiwanese native folk songs, which are characterized by the use of the Chinese traditional modes.

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<sup>50</sup> Ying-Chi Lin, *Taiwanese Music and Musicians* (Taipei, 2010), 107, 110.

<sup>51</sup> Yin Yang, *Chinese Music History* (Taipei, 1987).

For example, the pentatonic scale is based on C major:



Figure 3-1 Chinese Pentatonic Modes

*Bang-chun-hong*, one of the most famous Taiwanese folk songs, features a pentatonic melody based on these five notes: DEF#AB (see Figure 3-2). There are only five notes based on D major throughout the entire piece and the tonic is D of the song and is supported by an authentic cadence. Therefore, it is a very typical song based on the Gong mode.

Besides *Bang-chun-hong*, most Taiwanese folk songs feature the Chinese traditional modes in the melody. The melody frequently contains minor thirds, which is the



Figure 3-2 *Bang-chun-hong*<sup>52</sup>

distinctive characteristic of Taiwanese folk songs, sounding minor even if while in a major key. As mentioned previously, while exiled from Taiwan, Hsiao conveyed his nostalgia for home by including folksongs in his compositions. Since *Bang-chun-hong* is well known in Taiwan and abroad, Hsiao adapted it for violin and strings (1970), for voice and piano (1993) and for violin and piano (1998).<sup>53</sup>

Hsiao not only adapted Taiwanese folksongs in some of his compositions, but also used Taiwanese texts in his art songs. The two best-known original songs of Hsiao are *Snack Stall* and *The Vagabond*.<sup>54</sup> The text of *Snack Stall* describes in detail the local food and drink in Taiwan, set to a delightful melody. *The Vagabond*, as the title suggests, describes the mood of people living abroad and the feeling of nostalgia for Taiwan. *The*

<sup>52</sup> Hen-Long Cheng and Li-Chuan Kuo, *Taiwanese Folk Songs* (Taipei, 2002), 79.

<sup>53</sup> Hua-Jung Yen, 153-159.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 41-43.

*Vagabond* reflects Hsiao's thoughts and feelings during the period he lived in USA.<sup>55</sup>

Hsiao's music describes what many Taiwanese feel when traveling or living abroad, and, because of this, Hsiao's music is becoming popular with Taiwanese people living in North America.<sup>56</sup>

### **Western Music**

Hsiao's music partially reflects the influence of Western music, particularly the Romantic tradition, as discussed earlier. Hsiao's piano music features lyrical melodies with long legato lines in the top voice and fluid accompaniment in the left hand, similar to some of the music of Chopin and Rachmaninoff.

The Taiwanese concert pianist, Lina Yeh, commented on Hsiao's piano music:

“Somehow you can always feel that there is a unique Taiwanese character in Hsiao's music, which has a very delicate and sincere emotion inside; very gentle and natural as the pure Taiwanese personality. The fine and elegant style with precise musical form recalls Rachmaninoff, who was also exiled just as Hsiao was. Even in suffering, they always kept their hope.”<sup>57</sup>

While Hsiao studied composition with professor Hsu at the National Taiwan Normal University, he diverged from the modernist compositional techniques espoused by Hsu. Instead Hsiao followed his natural instincts and pursued a more traditional Romantic style.

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<sup>55</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 180.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 156-224.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 32.



As he gained experience as a composer, Hsiao turned to more diverse techniques, including the use of all twenty-four major and minor keys of Western music, the pentatonic scale, chromatic harmony, and bitonality. His teacher, Hsu, has written:

“In the early period of Hsiao’s compositional career, his works all were based on Chopin’s style. It was a common phenomenon to a pianist. To Hsiao, as a Romantic composer, Chopin is everything. Chopin is Hsiao’s idol. I gave him my suggestion to be far away from Chopin, and to try to learn the way of Debussy. If you do this, then you will find your own style. I know he can do it, and he will find it!

Hsiao went to America in 1977. I heard he published a great many new works abroad, including the three great concerti for violin, cello and piano, the songs, works for chorus, and many different transcriptions of Taiwanese folk songs. Hsiao gradually created his own music language. Finally, his music is not only in the circle around Chopin. Although Hsiao did not develop his more modern style via the inspiration of Debussy’s music, he still found his own dialect. Because he loves Taiwan, he had to look for the root of music in Taiwan- the Taiwanese folk songs, to be the central element in his music. On the other hand, he had to create his music with the techniques and knowledge of 20<sup>th</sup> century Western music. As a composer, Hsiao is totally faithful to himself in his unique musical world.

Above all, it is not only because he was one of my students, but he is an outstanding composer in the international stage- he is an honor to Taiwan.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 189-191.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *MEMORIES OF HOME FOR SOLO PIANO*

This chapter presents an analysis of *Memories of Home* from a formal and stylistic perspective. In addition, the chapter presents the work as a pedagogical tool to introduce Romantic and Impressionistic styles to intermediate piano students. Hsiao composed in a wide range of musical styles and forms, including solo instrumental genres, symphonies, sacred music, concerti, chamber music, and vocal music. Hsiao's ambition was that his achievement in composition would be as successful as his performing career, and he aspired to write effective and challenging piano music.<sup>59</sup> *Memories of Home* shows skilled craftsmanship and careful attention to detail, despite the relative lack of performance difficulty. It is the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate how Hsiao's *Memories of Home* can serve as an effective pedagogical tool for intermediate piano students. Since these pieces present various pianistic skills in an introductory manner, Hsiao's music can be excellent training in preparation toward learning more difficult compositions.

*Memories of Home* was completed in 1987 while Hsiao still lived in the United States; the work was dedicated to his piano professor, Dr. Milton Stern. Hsiao depicted his nostalgia for Taiwan through these character pieces with descriptive titles. There are six movements in this collection: *Prelude*, *Memory*, *Playground*, *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*,

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 34-40.

*Elegy*, and *Frolic*. The collection was first published in 1989, by the Southern California Taiwanese Composer's Foundation.

### 1. *Prelude*

While the other pieces in *Memories of Home* carry descriptive titles, Hsiao used a traditional musical form to name this first movement. In the Baroque era, preludes were pieces intended to introduce subsequent movements, as in Bach's English Suites, and the Well-Tempered Clavier. In the Romantic era, the prelude became a type of character piece, as in Chopin's *Preludes*, Opus 28, and subsequent composers, such as Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Gershwin also composed preludes of this type. In Hsiao's *Memories of Home*, the Prelude serves as an introduction to the suite. The nuances of Hsiao's compositional style are shown through his musical notations indicating the dynamics, tempi, articulations, and playing techniques. Hsiao frequently writes cantabile melodies in a lyrical style, phrasing slurs are common in his scores. At the beginning of the movement, he clearly marks the tempo with a descriptive indication and a metronome marking. He often indicates a *ritardando* to end a section, and then starts the next section *a tempo*.

This piece is comprised of two sections, an introduction, and a transitional section (see Figure 4-1).

Introduction	Section 1	Transition	Section 2
mm. 1-10	mm. 11-16	mm. 17-22	mm. 23-29

Figure 4-1 Formal structure of *Prelude*

The introduction lasts until measure ten. Hsiao starts the piece at C2 and ascends with a crescendo into a high register, revealing the boisterous scene of this prelude. In the fourth beat of measures two and four, Hsiao places a *sforzando* on the E-flat, the *sforzando* emphasizes the key relationship between the tonic and chromatic mediant. The musical effect of this eighth-note pattern in the introduction is common in Impressionistic compositions, especially Debussy's music.

Several features make the *Prelude* an introduction to the technical and musical concepts of Debussy and other Impressionist composers. First, the *Prelude* uses a single hand position in multiple registers, allowing intermediate students to learn how to shift quickly between passages in different registers. The *Prelude* does not require the pianist to play many notes, limiting the musical material to a single note in the left hand and dyads in the right hand. This allows the intermediate piano student to focus on dynamic contrasts and the use of *ritardando* (see Figure 4-2), and many others.

Hand distribution for Impressionistic effect:

**Prelude**

**Allegro vivace giocoso (♩ = 120)**

Figure 4-2 *Prelude* mm. 1-10<sup>60</sup>

Figure 4-3 illustrates how Debussy's *Jardins sous la pluie*, at a more advanced level, requires similar skills to those required in Hsiao's *Prelude*. In Debussy's example, the pianist must execute broken chords in the right hand at a considerably faster tempo than that required in Hsiao's *Prelude*. Measures one to nine of Hsiao's *Prelude* could serve as an introduction to the techniques required in *Jardins sous la pluie* by using distribution of the hands marked in Figure 4-2. In Hsiao's *Prelude*, intermediate students will find it possible to execute these rapid passages more easily than those found in Debussy's works due to the

<sup>60</sup> Tyzen Hsiao, *Memories of Home*, Op.49, *Tyzen Hsiao Piano Series* (Taipei: Formosa Singers Publishing, 2007), 2.

limited range of these rapid patterns. Since this repetitive broken-chord technique is common in the Impressionist era, using Hsiao's *Prelude* as an introduction to the style could be a useful option for piano teachers.



Figure 4-3 Debussy, *Jardins sous la pluie*, from *Estampes* mm. 4-6<sup>61</sup>

According to Chuan-Hsein Chuang who personally knew Hsiao, section one begins in measure eleven and depicts a busy scene at a country festival.<sup>62</sup> Hsiao depicts the scene with rising staccato eighth notes and syncopated notes in the left hand, along with a sixteenth-note melody in the right hand. This section offers intermediate students the opportunity to practice playing contrasting material with legato in the right hand and simultaneous staccato in the left hand. In measure twelve the student must balance the melody and accompaniment all in one hand. Because these passages fit very well under the hands, they can serve as an introduction for intermediate students on how to achieve the right balance of melody and accompaniment, as well as the technique of melody and

<sup>61</sup> Claude Debussy, *Estampes* (Paris: Durand & Fils, 1903), 17.

<sup>62</sup> Tyzen Hsiao, *Memories of Home*, Op.49, [http://blog.roodo.com/proud\\_wolf/archives/4590317.html](http://blog.roodo.com/proud_wolf/archives/4590317.html). (December 7, 2007).

accompaniment combined with one hand (see Figure 4-4).



Figure 4-4 *Prelude* mm. 11-12<sup>63</sup>

The prelude features a Chinese traditional mode, which is similar to the pentatonic scale in Western music. Most Chinese composers incorporate the Chinese modes into their compositions. The Chinese mode is the most important musical element in this prelude, and it appears throughout the entire movement.

Here is a letter from Hsiao to pianist Fang-Yu Chen, written in 1987:

“About this Prelude in C, it was written in 1978 when I lived in Atlanta, Georgia. It originally belonged to the work *The Vagabond*. I love it... It is a piece that simply combines the styles and colors of Western and Oriental music.”<sup>64</sup>

Although Debussy often used the pentatonic scale in his music, his music is difficult for intermediate students to play and understand because of the sheer density of notes. In Hsiao’s *Prelude*, the use of the pentatonic scale is much easier to understand, and the music is easier for the intermediate student to learn.

<sup>63</sup> Hsiao, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 314

The main theme at measure eleven and the melody at measure fourteen are built on the C pentatonic scale; the first one starts on C: CDEGA, and the second one starts on G: GACDE, which are also the Chinese traditional *Gong* mode and *Zhi* mode (see Figure 4-5).



Figure 4-5.1 *Prelude* m. 11<sup>65</sup>



Figure 4-5.2 *Prelude* m. 14<sup>66</sup>

Another common element appearing frequently in Hsiao's music is the chromatic scale. Chromaticism is very common in the music of the Romantic Era, especially in the

<sup>65</sup> Hsiao, 2.  
<sup>66</sup> Hsiao, 2.



compositions of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, both of whom used chromatic scales and harmonies to enhance musical climaxes and modulation. As a Romantic composer, Hsiao applied chromaticism in this prelude as well.

Ru-Ping Chen mentioned this character in her study:

“....he employs the western diatonic major and minor system for the foundation of the harmony. In his harmonic language, the altered chords and chromatic scales are extensively used to create the lush color of the late romantic period.”<sup>67</sup>

Taiwanese concert pianist, Fan-Yu Chen, also commented on his harmony:

“In his harmonic treatment, he divined the appropriate chords, and showed preference for chromatic progression and modulations, which he felt heightened the emotional content of the music.”<sup>68</sup>

The first melody starts on A and descends to D. It then immediately employs a D-sharp to reach the E that begins the next strain. Here we can see Hsiao using chromatic elements to connect the phrases. The next section, the transition, emphasizes the highest point of this piece in the same manner as section one: through continuously ascending chromatic notes. The building of the climax is achieved by means of sequential repetition, both chromatic and diatonic, and the prolongation of a single harmony as the climax approaches. This is a good passage to teach intermediate students about sudden dynamic

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<sup>67</sup> Ru-Ping Chen, “The Cello Works of Hsiao Tyzen,” (Ph. D diss., The Ohio State University, 1999), 48.

<sup>68</sup> Fan-Yu Chen. Foreword. *Tyzen Hsiao: Piano Concerto in C minor, Op.53*. (California Composers Foundation , 1993)

changes and sound control in repetitive passages. This passage also helps students learning to play fast notes and to increase finger agility (see Figure 4-6).



Figure 4-6 *Prelude* mm. 17-22<sup>69</sup>

In the final section of this piece, there is an interesting contrast between the two hands. The topmost line, which is the melody of the right hand, consists of the C major scale. The bottom line, which is the accompaniment in the left hand, is built on the G flat pentatonic scale, starting on B flat, which is the *Jue* mode: B flat, D flat, E flat, G flat, A flat. The effect of the dissonance created by the white keys in the right hand with the black keys in the left hand increases the interest of this piece. Also, the use of two different keys simultaneously in the music, which is bitonality, builds excitement and complicates the texture (see Figure 4-7).

<sup>69</sup> Hsiao, 3.

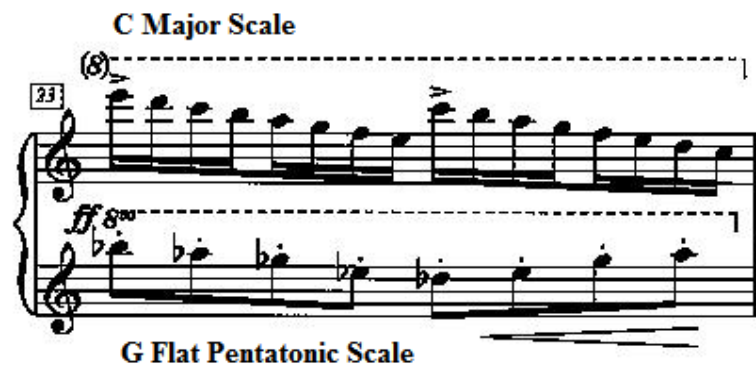


Figure 4-7 *Prelude* m. 23<sup>70</sup>

The final chord of this Prelude—that collection of pitches, with the C in three octaves—is a referential sonority that replaces the C major triad (see Figure 4-8).



Figure 4-8 *Prelude* mm. 30-32<sup>71</sup>

It is noteworthy that, in the last measure of Figure 4-7, Hsiao marks a crescendo, leading to a “*fff*” on a sustained chord. This is obviously impossible to realize literally on the piano. Perhaps Hsiao simply wanted to indicate that this last chord should be played as

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 3.

loud as possible, the effect might result in a conspicuous contrast and shift in musical emotion and tone color between the first movement and the second movement of the suite.

In this short prelude, lasting only one-and-a-half minutes, Hsiao explores many techniques on the piano, including the use of the full range of the keyboard, strong rhythmic figures, chromaticism, and the Chinese Gong mode (pentatonic scale). While notation with numerous accidentals in the score looks complicated, the piece is not difficult for the intermediate student to learn the notes. As a teaching tool, it is an introduction to the Impressionistic style, balance of melody and accompaniment in one hand, contrasting articulations between the hands, sudden dynamic changes, and sound control in repetitive passages. These techniques all occur in a short character piece that is technically accessible to intermediate students.

## **2. Memory**

Hsiao composed *The Vagabond* for solo voice in 1978 while living in Atlanta. That year was the first and the most difficult year of Hsiao's life in the United States and, as the title implies, the piece is a reflection of the composer's feelings at this time. *The Vagabond* was successful piece with audiences in 1978, so Hsiao decided to make an arrangement for solo piano.

*The Vagabond* contains three sections. The first and last sections ended up as the first

movement in *Memories of Home*, the *Prelude* in C, the slow middle section of *The Vagabond* became the second movement, *Memory*.

Fang-Yu Chen performed this piece in Scarsdale, New York in 1987, and wrote afterwards:

“The beautiful and cantabile melody is the most important thing to pay attention to when performing this piece. You also have to pay attention to the accompaniment of the left hand; to analyze the harmony of the accompaniment and to realize exactly the functions of changing notes... It is very important to arrange the long phrase and the changing of tone color. Dedicated playing is the only way to impress the audience and to totally express the connotation of this music.”<sup>72</sup>

This character piece features a Romantic style of composition, and a form based on multiple restatements of a theme that is varied with each repetition. The theme has similarities with such works as the Rondo in A minor, K. 511, by Mozart and the Berceuse, Opus 57, of Chopin. Hsiao uses a single cantabile motive throughout the movement and makes slight changes each time the theme recurs. Although this idea of thematic variation is similar to that of composers such as Mozart and Chopin, the compositional technique of Hsiao is individual. In *Memory*, the theme is varied by means of ornamentation.

Introduction	A section	B section	A' section
mm. 1-2	mm. 3-19	mm. 20-27	mm. 28-46

Figure 4-9 Formal structure of *Memory*

<sup>72</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 314

Students must learn the many techniques of playing Romantic music, such as in Chopin's compositions. Chopin's music features long legato lines, and presents many challenges, including wide-ranging accompanimental parts for the left hand, precise pedaling, technique, and *rubato* playing style.

Hsiao's *Memory*, a three-page Romantic-style character piece, is shorter and less complicated than most of Chopin's works. The piece features long legato lines in the melody and simple accompanimental figures in the left hand. Hsiao marks *cantabile* in this piece to clearly show his intent, and indicates a tempo change with: *ritardando* at the end of a section, followed by *a tempo* at the beginning of the next section. This tempo marking is a distinguishing feature of Hsiao's music.

Besides the musical style, Hsiao's accompanimental figures share certain technical aspects in common with Romantic style composers such as Chopin and Rachmaninoff. Widely spaced arpeggios, held together by means of the pedal, occur often in Chopin and Rachmaninoff's music. Hsiao also incorporates these patterns in his music. Compared to Chopin and Rachmaninoff's piano examples, Hsiao's piano technique is simple, since the notes lie in one hand position (see Figure 4-10).

Hsiao uses chords (triads) and single notes to create the melody, and the contours of the melody do not contain wide leaps, intermediate students can more easily execute the polyrhythmic patterns and balance the melody and accompaniment in one hand.



Figure 4-10.1 *Memory* mm. 1-12<sup>73</sup>



Figure 4-10.2 Rachmaninoff, *Moments Musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 5 mm. 9-14<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Hsiao, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Sergei Rachmaninoff, *Moments Musicaux*, Op. 16 (Moscow, 1897), 29.

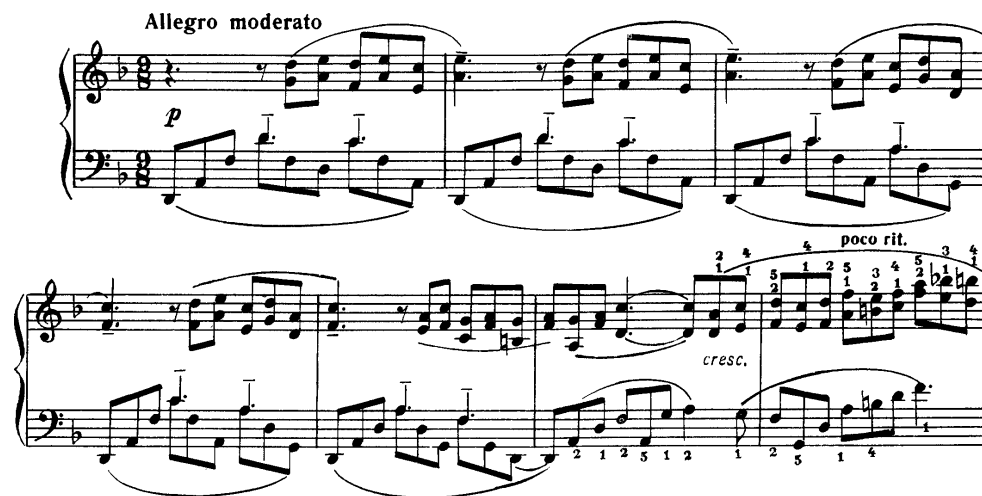


Figure 4-10.3 Rachmaninoff, *Etudes-Tableaux*, Opus 39, No. 8 mm. 1-7<sup>75</sup>

While the student must learn to play two-against-three, measures twenty-eight and thirty-one may be considered the most difficult in this piece due to the rhythm of four-against-three (see Figure 4-11).

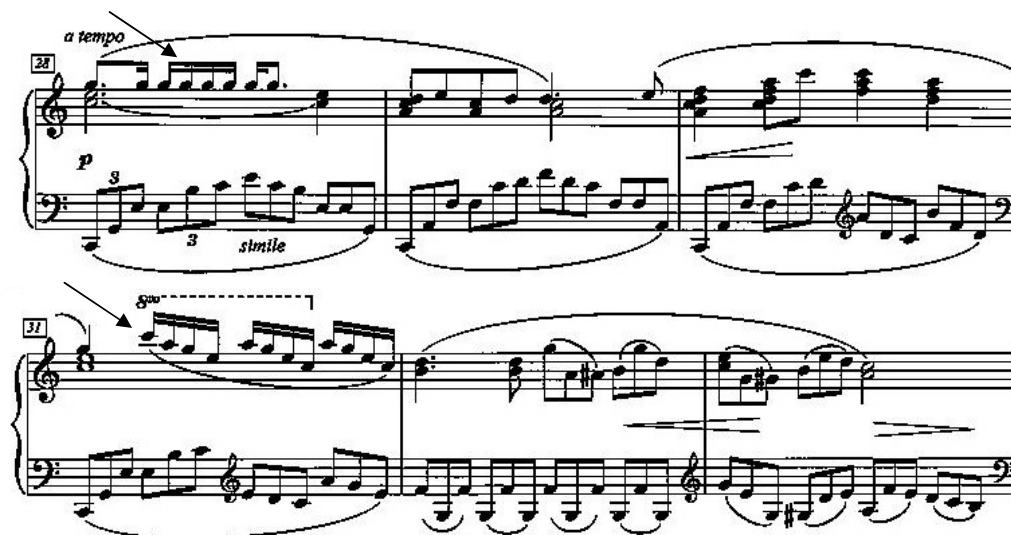


Figure 4-11 *Memory* mm. 28-33<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Sergei Rachmaninoff, *Etudes-Tableaux*, Op. 39 (Moscow, 1970), 51.  
<sup>76</sup> Hsiao, 5-6.



The main melody of *Memory* is composed of the chord, this allows the student to practice voicing and balance between melody and accompaniment. Voicing and balance are also some of the main challenges in performing Chopin's works (see Figure 4-12).

**Berceuse.**  
Op. 57. F. Chopin.

Andante.

The musical score for Chopin's *Berceuse*, Op. 57, measures 1-14, is presented in three systems. The key signature is one flat (F major), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante.' and the dynamics include 'p' (piano) and 'dolce'. The score shows the right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef) staves. The left hand accompaniment is characterized by large leaps and frequent hand-position shifts, while the right hand plays a two-voice line with frequent hand-position shifts. The score includes fingerings, slurs, and pedaling markings.

Figure 4-12 Chopin, *Berceuse*, Op. 57 mm. 1-14<sup>77</sup>

As an example above, Chopin's *Berceuse* requires large leaps and *legato* playing in the left-hand accompaniment, and two-voice lines with frequent hand-position shifts beginning in measure seven. These are challenging for intermediate students to master. Hsiao's

<sup>77</sup> Fryderyk Chopin, *Berceuse*, Op. 57 (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1879), 3.

*Memory* allows intermediate students to practice proper balance, within a technically accessible range, before moving on to more challenging works such as in Chopin's music.

Hsiao's melodies often begin with ascending seconds and thirds and finish with descending thirds and fourths (see Figure 4-13). This piece has no complicated progressions or accidentals; it is relatively easy for the intermediate level student to memorize.



Figure 4-13 *Memory* mm. 16-21<sup>78</sup>

### 3. Playground

This movement is constructed in simple ternary form with coda. The formal structure:

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<sup>78</sup> Hsiao, 5.

A section	B section	A' section	Coda
mm. 1-16	mm. 17-32	mm. 33-44	mm. 45-61

Figure 4-14 Formal structure of *Playground*

According to Chuang, this two page character piece attempts to portray the playfulness of children.<sup>79</sup> The musical instructions *legato and playful* instruct the performer in the character. The hushed, quick, and playful mood Hsiao conjures up is likely reminiscent of his own childhood, playing with other children in the countryside.<sup>80</sup> In measure eight, Hsiao marks *poco marcato* to indicate that this theme, which first appeared in a *piano* dynamic, should be emphasized. Eight measures later, Hsiao indicates *poco scherzando* to initiate the B section, which is in a faster tempo. From here on Hsiao utilizes various musical terms to indicate changes of character every eight measures throughout the B section. The remainder of the piece contains many performance indications, such as *poco rit., a tempo, dolce, broader, poco agitato, molto crescendo, pesante, sostenuto* and *smorzando*. These musical terms clearly indicate the necessary articulations, dynamics, tempi, and mood changes. The frequent tempo and mood changes in this short movement can be a good training tool for intermediate students.

As mentioned in chapter three, Hsiao's teacher, Hsu, introduced the compositional

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<sup>79</sup> Tyzen Hsiao, *Memories of Home*, Op.49, [http://blog.roodo.com/proud\\_wolf/archives/4590317.html](http://blog.roodo.com/proud_wolf/archives/4590317.html). (December 7, 2007).

<sup>80</sup> Hua-Jung Yen, 18-21.

techniques of Debussy from the very beginning of Hsiao's study. In *Playground*, Hsiao chose not to write specifically in the style of Debussy, however, it is interesting that Debussy's shadow often lurks in the background of his music. At the beginning of *Playground*, Hsiao writes for both hands playing together in octaves and uses the syncopation to achieve the effect of playfulness in the main theme (see Figure 4-15), which is the same technique that Debussy employs in *Golliwogg's Cakewalk* (see Figure 4-16).

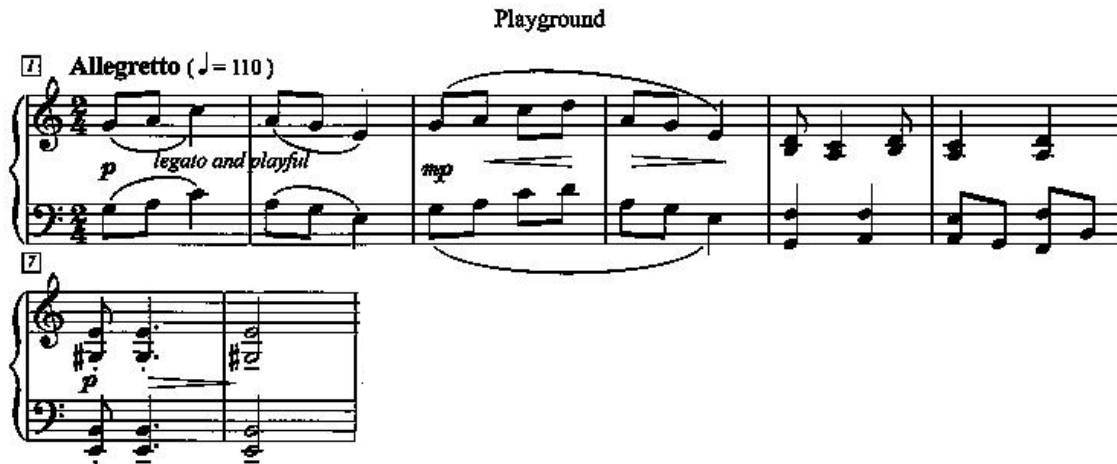


Figure 4-15 *Playground* mm. 1-8<sup>81</sup>

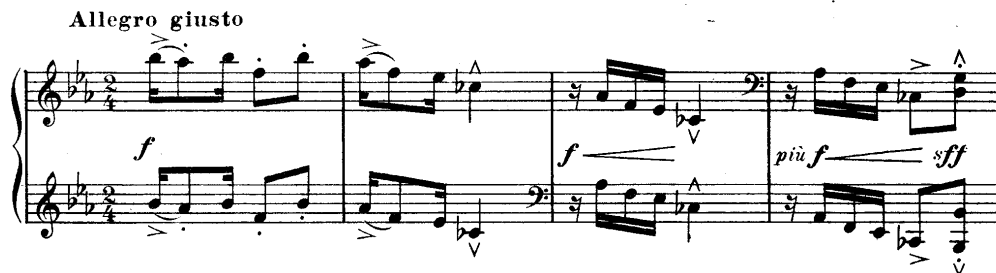


Figure 4-16 Debussy, *Golliwogg's Cakewalk* mm.1-4<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Hsiao, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Claude Debussy, *Golliwogg's Cakewalk from Children's Corner* (Paris: Durand & Fils, 1908).

Another similarity appears in measure forty-seven of *Playground*. The section begins the sixteenth-note figuration (see Figure 4-17) that is common in the Impressionistic style of composition and often appears in the music of Debussy and Ravel (see Figure 4-18).



Figure 4-17 *Playground* mm. 48-52<sup>83</sup>

Figure 4-18.1 Debussy, *Pagodes*, from *Estampes* m. 77-81<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Hsiao, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Debussy, 8.



Figure 4-18.2 Ravel, *Jeux d'eau* m. 80<sup>85</sup>

Aside from the fact that the examples from Debussy and Ravel contain many more notes per beat, their music contains greater difficulties, including polyrhythms, extended hand positions, and the necessity of voicing the primary melodic line in the left hand which is often in the inner voice. In *Playground*, Hsiao's writing contains only white keys and no shifting hand positions. This piece is easier to perform for the intermediate student, and is appropriate material to prepare the student to play the works of Debussy and Ravel.

In *Playground*, the first motive of the main theme, measures one to eight are built on the C pentatonic scale, starting on E. In Hsiao's compositional technique this is in the Chinese traditional mode *Jue*: EGACD; and in measures nine to sixteen, the melody is built on *Gong* mode: CDEGA. The chromatic scale is also frequently written in the accompaniment of the left hand throughout the piece. Hsiao indicates that the return to the A' section should be played one octave higher than the opening A section, producing the

<sup>85</sup> Maurice Ravel, *Jeux d'eau* (Paris: E. Demets, 1902), 12.

effect of an echo at the end of the piece to connect with the coda (see Figure 4-19). The change of registers also creates a contrast to the beginning of the movement.



Figure 4-19 *Playground* mm. 31-36<sup>86</sup>

There are many musical instructions indicated in the final coda section. Important features of the coda begin with the tempo marking of *a tempo*, broader, dynamic markings of *f*, with a crescendo from *f* to *ff*, *poco agitato*. *Marcato* is written for the left hand in measure forty-seven. There is a sudden diminuendo in measures fifty-one to fifty-three to a *p* dynamic, and then *molto crescendo* within two measures to *f* (marked *pesante*). A *glissando*, another technique useful for intermediate students, appears in measure fifty-six (see Figure 4-20). Measure fifty-seven arrives at a dynamic marking of *ff*, *sostenuto*.

The piece ends with diminuendo and the theme in rhythmic diminution, a marking of *smorzando* (slowing down, getting softer) creates contrast to the start of the coda.

Numerous musical instructions in a short coda provide challenging material for the

<sup>86</sup> Hsiao, 8.

intermediate piano student. This short character piece provides the student with an excellent exercise in a variety of nuances.



Figure 4-20 *Playground* mm. 48-61<sup>87</sup>

#### 4. Ancient Taiwanese Melody

The English title of this movement, *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, was given by the publisher. While the title implies that Hsiao borrowed an old Taiwanese folk song as the main material of this movement, the piece is in fact Hsiao's original composition.

This piece features a repeated melody in F major, using the F pentatonic scale:

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 8.



FGACD. The first phrase is built on the Chinese mode *Jue*: ACDFG, the second phrase is built on *Gong* mode: FGACD. There is a repeated accompaniment pattern from beginning to end (see Figure 4-21).

IV 台灣清明古調  
Ancient Taiwanese Melody

Andante cantabile sostenuto (♩ = 60)

Figure 4-21 *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* mm. 1-12<sup>88</sup>

In Hsiao's *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* there are three sections, plus a short introduction and a codetta (see Figure 4-22).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 9.

Introduction	A section	B section	A' section	Codetta
mm. 1-2	mm. 3-18	mm. 19-27	mm. 28-35	mm. 36-40

Figure 4-22 Formal structure of *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*

The piece contains a short development section between the two statements of the A section. Compared to other sections of this piece, the sixteen-measure A section is rather long. This main theme is simply a descending motive from A to F. This motive recurs in the last measure, and Hsiao emphasizes it with tenuto markings (see Figure 4-23).

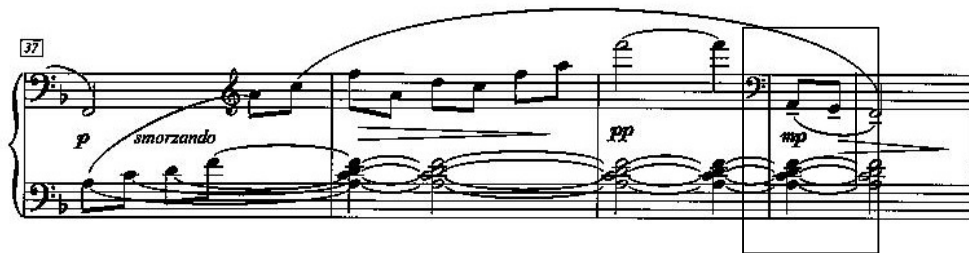


Figure 4-23 *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* mm. 37-40<sup>89</sup>

Compared to Chopin's *Prelude* in E minor, Hsiao's *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* also has a descending motive in the melody and a steady pattern of accompaniment in the left hand from beginning to end. It is interesting to compare these two works, especially on the ease of playing musically. Chopin's *Prelude* is very difficult to play musically because there are

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 10.

only two main notes in the melody that are sustained for a long time. Hsiao's *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* is much easier to play musically because the melody is more tuneful. Differences in the two compositions such as shown in example 4-24, the melody of the *Prelude* in E minor consists mostly of long, sustained notes that alternate between B and C, compared to the melodic material of *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, which contains notes of much shorter duration and with a greater variety of pitches.



Figure 4-24 Chopin, *Prelude* No.4 in E minor, Opus 28<sup>90</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Chopin, *Prelude*, Op. 28 (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1880), 164.

*Ancient Taiwanese Melody* is a piece to teach variety of musical nuances in repeated material. The song like melody repeats constantly throughout the movement resulting in a challenging performance in varying repetition. The main theme consists of voicing in three octave registers. It is important for the student to change the nuances since the theme recurs so often. This melody not only gives intermediate students a good opportunity to learn variety in musical playing, but also provides an exercise for memorization.

The movement begins with two measures of left hand accompaniment before bringing in the melody. It is notable that in *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, Hsiao instructs the performer by marking the term *rubato* in measure thirty-two to enhance the tempo of this simple movement.

In *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, Hsiao uses simple ornaments and a syncopated dotted rhythm in the main melody allowing the melody to achieve a style similar to that of traditional Taiwanese folksongs (see Figure 4-25 and refer to Figure 3-2).

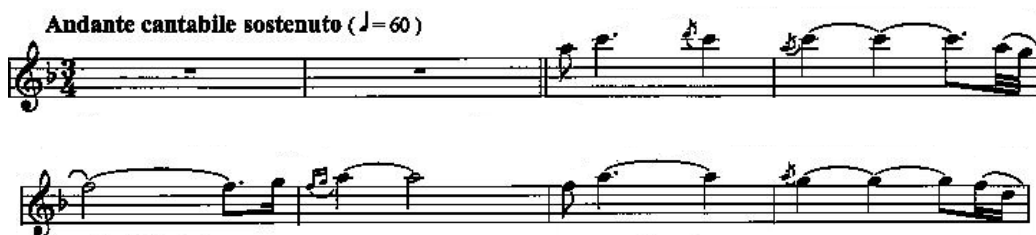


Figure 4-25 The main theme of *Ancient Taiwanese Melody*<sup>91</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Hsiao, 10.

Although *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* is imbued with the Taiwanese folk style, Hsiao did not directly use the material of any traditional Taiwanese folk songs in this piece. This compositional style and the use of folksong are similar with Bela Bartok's music. Bartok collected the folk song and arranged them; further, he created his own individual musical idiom by combining the characteristic of Hungarian peasant music with the Western traditional art music. He created various original works based on the material of the folk music.<sup>92</sup>

“Folk art cannot have a fertile influence on a composer unless he knows the peasant music of his native country as thoroughly as he does his mother tongue. In this way folk music will flow through the veins of the composer and the idiom of peasant music will have become his own musical language, which he will use spontaneously, involuntarily, and naturally, just as a poet uses his mother tongue.

-- Bela Bartok”<sup>93</sup>

## 5. Elegy

Of the suite, *Elegy* in A minor is a study in cantabile playing. The opening motive is built on the C pentatonic scale, starting on E, which is Chinese mode *Jue*: EGACD. It is made up of an ascending and descending fifth. When this motive recurs in the A' section, it continues down from A5 to A3. After the A' section, the theme continues down two octaves and becomes a descending melody (see Figure 4-26).

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<sup>92</sup> J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010) 810-816.

<sup>93</sup> Barbara Nissman, *Bartok and the Piano: A Performer's View* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press Lanha, MD, USA, 2002), 83.

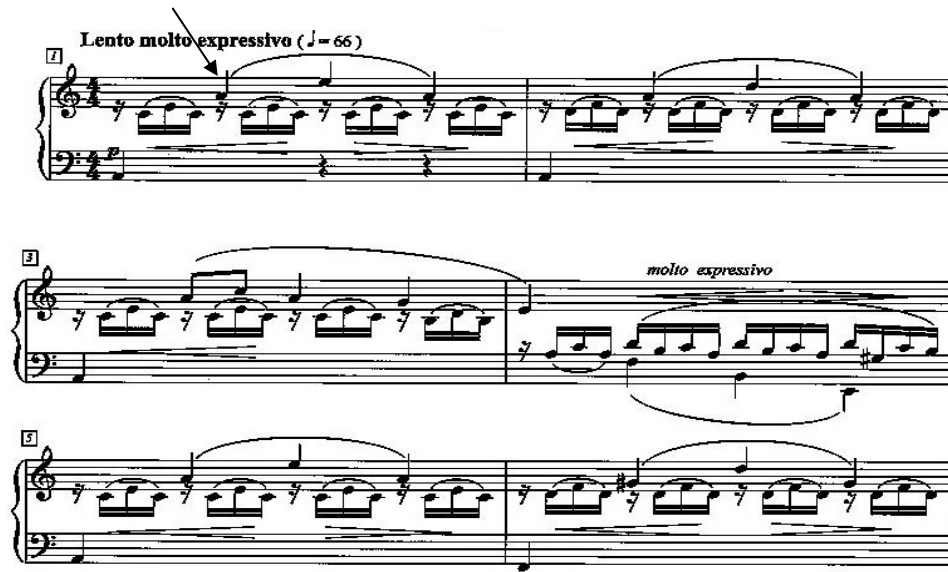


Figure 4-26.1 *Elegy* mm. 1-6<sup>94</sup>



Figure 4-26.2 *Elegy* mm. 34-37<sup>95</sup>

*Elegy* is written in a simple ternary form (see Figure 4-27). Though many Taiwanese composers were composing mostly atonal music, this piece demonstrates Hsiao's adherence to tonality in 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>94</sup> Hsiao, 11.  
<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 13.

A section	B section	A' section
mm. 1-9	mm. 10-33	mm. 34-48

Figure 4-27 Formal structure of *Elegy*

Even though Hsiao did not indicate the word *cantabile* in the score, the technical requirements of this piece are very similar to those of his composition *Memory*, and include *cantabile* playing technique as well as careful balance between melody and accompaniment. Although this piece may at first appear complex to the intermediate student, this is in fact easier to master than the previous piece *Memory*, due to the balance of melody and accompaniment played with both hands, rather than one hand technique such as in necessary in *Memory*.

In measure thirty-two to the fourth beat of measure thirty-three, Hsiao introduces a long trill in an *ff* dynamic; this is an important technique for the intermediate piano student. The trill is not just a melodic ornament, but also a sound effect, and it serves as a connection between the recitative-like passages of the B section and the A' section. Debussy uses a trill in *p* dynamic with *crescendo*, and quick thirty-second notes at the opening of *L'isle Joyeuse*, this is difficult for intermediate students to play smoothly and at the required tempo. Hsiao uses the same technique in *Elegy*, although in a loud *ff* dynamic, has fewer notes, and is easier to play (see Figure 4-28).

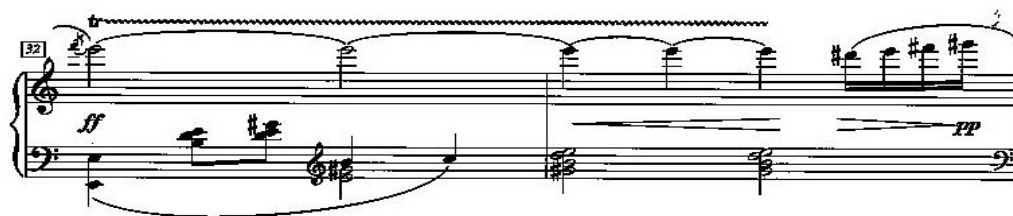


Figure 4-28.1 *Elegy* mm. 32-33<sup>96</sup>



Figure 4-28.2 Debussy, *L'isle Joyeuse* mm. 1-2<sup>97</sup>

In *Elegy*, the technique required to play the theme is similar to Liszt's *Un Sospiro*, in which the left hand crosses over the right hand to smoothly play the main melody in the top voice with a sotto-voce sound. The technique is difficult in Liszt's musical example, where both hands play the widely spaced arpeggio accompaniments. This passage challenges the intermediate piano student due to an even, quick, and soft accompaniment, while bringing out a cantabile melody. The idea is greatly simplified in Hsiao's *Elegy*, where accompaniment is played by the right hand, instead of alternating between the hands, staying in one position without wide shifts. Hsiao has simplified some similar techniques that are more accessible for intermediate piano students (see Figure 4-29).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>97</sup> Debussy, *Klavierwerke, Band VI* (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1973), 56.





Figure 4-29.1 *Elegy* mm. 1-2<sup>98</sup>



Figure 4-29.2 Liszt, *Un Sospiro* mm. 3-4<sup>99</sup>

## 6. Frolic

A ternary form is used in this movement (see Figure 4-30).

A section	B section	A section
mm. 1-26	mm. 27-64	mm. 65-86

Figure 4-30 Formal structure of *Frolic*

*Frolic* is the last movement of this suite and is the longest and most challenging piece

<sup>98</sup> Hsiao, 11.

<sup>99</sup> Liszt, *Musikalische Werke. Serie II, Band 3* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911), 18.

to play. The title suggests a scene of joy and hilarity.<sup>100</sup> In measure two, the indication *sempre staccato* clearly indicates the main technical challenge of this movement. For the intermediate piano student, the difficulty of the opening theme lies in the constant staccato articulation for both hands at a rapid tempo (see Figure 4-31).



Figure 4-31 *Frolic* mm. 1-9<sup>101</sup>

In addition to the rapid repeated notes and staccato articulation in the A section, the movement features several advanced piano techniques; in the fast section there are wide leaps in the accompaniment of the left hand, alternations of staccato and legato playing in both hands simultaneously, rapid changes of hand-position, recitative-like passages,

<sup>100</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 204.

<sup>101</sup> Hsiao, 15.

arpeggios spanning various registers, rapid broken octave passages, and an *accelerando* in the last four measures. In addition to the above-mentioned musical elements, Hsiao uses an energetic rhythm throughout the movement, including many accents and syncopations in the B section. The many musical elements in this movement provide excellent technical training for intermediate students.

An interesting pattern of accompaniment that often appears in Hsiao's music is the use of a broken fifth overlapped with a major second. This pattern appears in the first and last movement of the suite (see Figure 4-32).

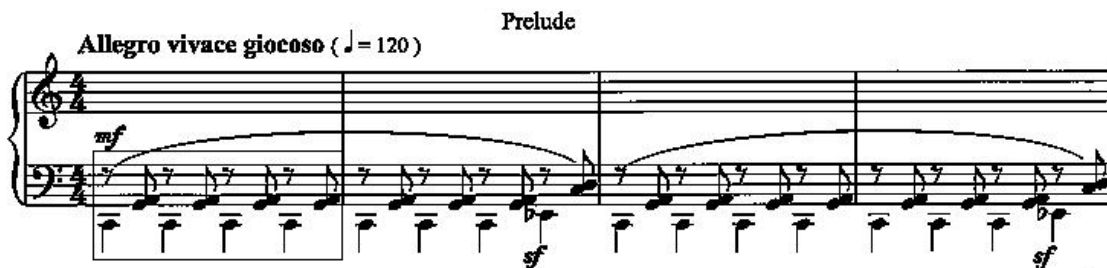


Figure 4-32.1 *Prelude* mm. 1-4<sup>102</sup>



Figure 4-32.2 *Frolic* mm. 1-3<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Hsiao, 2.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 15.

The figuration has been referred to as the “Hsiao’s Fifth” by a group of young American musicians<sup>104</sup> and can be seen as one of the hallmarks of his piano style—one which lends picquancy and a recognizable Asian identity.

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<sup>104</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 247.

## CONCLUSION

Though many 20<sup>th</sup>–century Taiwanese composers work in a modernist style, most of the piano music of Tyzen Hsiao is composed in a more conservative style. Hsiao continued on his own path much as the great Romantic, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In these six short pieces, Hsiao achieves an eclectic style, with ingredients of Romanticism, Modernism and Orientalism. Despite his insistence on tradition, Hsiao built a successful career and occupies an important position among Taiwanese composers. *Memories of Home* is comprised of six short character pieces. Hsiao has made each piece unique. Whether he is conveying the strong yearning for his homeland, recalling the unforgettable memories of his childhood, or remembering the fond impression of celebrations in Taiwan, Hsiao describes in detail through the descriptive title and a picturesque compositional technique.

The suite of pieces contained in *Memories of Home* is ideal teaching material for the intermediate level piano student due to the playable techniques that fit well in the hands. More importantly, it serves as a clear introduction of multiple important musical styles and interpretive elements. Each movement presents technical challenges that will prepare the student for the more advanced works of the Romantic, Impressionistic, and contemporary styles of music.

Tyzen Hsiao is not a prolific composer; however, being an advanced pianist, he has written music that shows refinement and taste. As we have seen from his international success, it is undeniable that Hsiao has won a place in the history of Taiwanese music.

*I have nothing; all I can give you is my music.*

--Tyzen Hsiao<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Heng-Zhe Lin, 29.

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## APPENDIX A

### CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF TYZEN HSIAO'S COMPLETE PIANO WORKS

#### **Piano Solo Works**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 詩影 I and II | <i>Poetic Echo I and II</i> (1974)         |
| 奇異恩典        | <i>Amazing Grace</i> (1985)                |
| 家園的回憶       | <i>Piano Suite Memories of Home</i> (1987) |
| 1. 前奏曲      | <i>Prelude</i>                             |
| 2. 回憶       | <i>Memory</i>                              |
| 3. 遊戲       | <i>Play Ground</i>                         |
| 4. 台灣清明古調   | <i>Ancient Taiwanese</i>                   |
| 5. 悲歌       | <i>Elegy</i>                               |
| 6. 狂歡       | <i>Frolic</i>                              |
| 告別練習曲       | <i>Etude Farewell</i> (1993)               |
| 觸技曲         | <i>Toccata Opus 57</i> (1995)              |
| 龍舟競賽        | <i>Dragon Boat Festival</i> (1996)         |

#### **Piano Duet**

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 幻想圓舞曲 | <i>Fantasy Waltz, Opus 58 for Two Pianos</i> (1975) |
| 豐收    | <i>Festival, for Four Hands</i> (1988)              |

#### **Chamber Music**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 前奏與賦格   | <i>Prelude and Fugue, for Piano Trio</i> (1973)                         |
| 夢幻的恆春小調 | <i>The Fantasy Heng-Chun Melody, for Flute, Violin and Piano</i> (1973) |
| 台灣之歌    | <i>The Song of Taiwan, for Violin and Piano</i> (1973)                  |
| 拾破舊的老人  | <i>The Old Junkman, for Violin and Piano</i> (1974)                     |
| 愛的魔術    | <i>The Magic of Love, for Cello and Piano</i> (1978)                    |

冥想曲	<i>Meditation</i> , for Violin and Piano (1975)
只為著你	<i>Just for You</i> , for Violin and Piano (1982)
燒肉粽	<i>Hot Dumpling</i> , for Piano Quintet (1982)
思鄉夜曲	Nocturne, Opus 43, for Violin and Piano (1982)
驚某調	<i>My Wife is the Boss</i> , for Violin and Piano (1982)
望你早歸	<i>Wish You Home Soon</i> , for Violin and Piano (1982)
戀歌	<i>Love Song</i> , for Violin and Piano (1983)
悲歌	<i>Elegy</i> , for Violin and Piano (1983)
風之舞	<i>Dancing Wind</i> , for Cello and Piano (1984)
咱台灣	<i>Taiwan, Ours</i> , for Piano and String Orchestra (1985)
台灣原住民組曲	<i>The High Lander's Suite</i> , for Piano and Quintet (1985)
離散	<i>The Straggling</i> , for Cello and Piano (1986)
客家綺想曲	<i>Capriccio in Hakka Melody</i> , for Cello and Piano (1987)
蘭陽舞曲	<i>Lan-Yang Dance</i> , for Piano Quintet (1988)
靜夜星空	<i>Evening Sky</i> , for Cello and Piano (1988)
幻想曲	<i>Fantasia</i> , for Flute and Piano (1995)
夜曲	Nocturne, for Violin and Piano (1995)
福爾摩沙	<i>The Formosa</i> , for Piano Trio (1996)

### **Piano Concerto**

C 小調協奏曲	Piano Concerto in C Minor, Opus, 53 (1990)
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**APPENDIX B**  
**LETTER OF PERMISSION**

From: Chuang Ken <proudwolf.ken@gmail.com>

To: Pei-Hsuan Chung <cph365@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Nov 16, 2012 at 5:39 PM

Subject: Permission

Dear Pei-Hsuan Chung,

This letter is to grant you permission for the right to print the excerpts of Tyzen Hsiao's work *Memories of Home* in your dissertation on the work.

Best wishes,

Chuan-Hsein, Chuang (莊傳賢)

Phone: 0935-337-493

Address: 8F, #6 Chung Cheng Rd. Sec. 2

Tamshui Sinpei 251

Taiwan

## VITA

Pei-Hsuan Chung is an active pianist. As a professional solo and collaborative pianist, Ms. Chung has presented many recitals with numerous instrumentalists, vocalists, and a wide array of chamber groups in both America and in her native country, Taiwan. Ms. Chung holds the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Tainan Woman's College of Arts and Technology, Taiwan, and the Master of Music degree from San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Currently, Ms. Chung is completing the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance with a minor in Collaborative Piano at Louisiana State University.